

Message Text

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FODAG

PARIS FOR UNESCO

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: FAO AORG EFIN
SUBJ: FAO : CO-CHAIRMEN'S REPORT OF SEPTEMBER 7 GGR MTG

REF: ROME 16825

1. SUMMARY OF MEETING OF SEPTEMBER 7:THE ROME GENEVA GROUP MET ON SEPTEMBER 7 TO CONTINUE DISCUSSION OF HOW TO ACHIEVE AND CONVEY TO THE DG A COMMON POSTURE ON THE FAO 1980-81 BUDGET. THE MEMBERS FAVORED CONTINUATION OF THEIR EFFORT TO DEVELOP A COMMON POSITION AND IN THE MAJORITY,BELIEVED THAT SUCH A POSITION SHOULD BE CONVEYED TO THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL AT THE TIME HE WAS BEGINNING TO RECEIVE AND ASSESS RESPONSES TO THE 1980-81 BUDGET MEMORANDUM WHICH, THE GROUP WAS RELIABLY INFORMED, HE HAD RECENTLY SENT TO THE MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND DIVISIONS.

2. IT WAS AGREED THAT THE DG'S CONSIDERATION OF REPLIES TO THAT MEMO MIGHT WELL BEGIN AT THE END OF SEPTEMBER AND MIGHT BE WELL ADVANCED BY THE TIME THE PROGRAM AND FINANCE COMMITTEES WERE
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IN SESSION IN MID-OCTOBER. IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES THE MAJORITY OF THE GROUP FELT THAT A CONTACT WITH THE DIRECTOR -GENERAL IN THE LAST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER WAS REQUIRED, POSSIBLY AFTER HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE NEAR EAST AND AFRICAN REGIONAL CONFERENCES AND BEFORE HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE.

3. THERE WAS WIDE SUPPORT FOR A PROPOSAL BY THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO ENGAGE THE DIRECTOR GENERAL IN AN INFORMAL SETTING, FOLLOWING THE PATTERN OF THE JULY 26 LUNCHEON. THIS STYLE WOULD DOWNPLAY THE IMAGE OF THE GROUP AS A FORMAL GROUPING AND PERMIT THE MEMBERS TO COMMUNICATE AS INDIVIDUAL PERM REPS FROM AN UNIDENTIFIED GROUPING OF LIKE-MINDED STATES. MEMBERS FAVORED TAKING A POSITION WITH THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL WHICH WOULD START WITH POINTS 3A AND 3B OF THE UK PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE MEMORANDUM ON THE AUGUST 10 MEETING AND THEN COMMEND AND ENCOURAGE THE DG'S RIGOROUS APPROACH TO THE BUDGETARY PROCESS. A NUMBER OF MEMBERS WERE ALSO RECEPTIVE TO THE IDEA OF INDICATING THAT FURTHER STRENGTHENING OF THE TREND TOWARD GREATER EXTRABUDGETARY SUPPORT FOR FAO FIELD ACTIVITY WOULD NOT SUGGEST A CORRESPONDING WILLINGNESS TO INCREASE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE REGULAR PROGRAMME. ON THE CONTRARY, DEMONSTRATION OF FIRM MANAGEMENT AND FINANCIAL DISCIPLINE IN THE REGULAR BUDGET WOULD BE THE POLICY MOST LIKELY TO ENCOURAGE GREATER EXTRABUDGETARY SUPPORT.

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4. BEYOND THIS POINT, THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT REACHED ON WHETHER THE MEMBERS SHOULD INDICATE IN THE INFORMAL EXCHANGE WITH THE DG THAT THEY WERE STARTING FROM A GENERAL ASSUMPTION THAT THEIR GOVERNMENTS WOULD BE RELUCTANT TO SEE THE 1980-81 BUDGET EXCEED A CERTAIN LEVEL EXPRESSED IN 1978-79 TERMS (I.E. BEFORE PROVIDING FOR INFLATION). THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FRANCE, WHO REPORTED THAT HE HAD, EARLIER IN THE WEEK, PRESENTED TO THE DG HIS GOVERNMENT'S ADVOCACY OF 10 PERCENT LIMIT IN ABSOLUTE TERMS ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL OF THE 1980-81 BUDGET WITH RESPECT TO THE PRESENT ONE, MADE CLEAR THAT HIS PRESENT INSTRUCTIONS WOULD NOT ALLOW

HIM TO PARTICIPATE IN AN APPROACH USING A REAL GROWTH APPROACH. THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS MADE CLEAR THAT HE COULD NOT TAKE A POSITION ON THE 1980-81 BUDGET UNTIL HE HAD HEARD THE DG'S PROPOSALS. (WHICH THE GROUP FELT WOULD NOT BE AVAILABLE IN ANY DETAIL BEFORE THE FAO COUNCIL.) THE REMAINING REPRESENTATIVES, WHILE AGREED THAT SOME INDICATION OF A REAL GROWTH TARGET COULD BE TIMELY, NOW THAT THE DG HAS TWICE LET DROP A BIENNIAL REAL GROWTH TARGET COMPARABLE TO THAT IN THE PREVIOUS BUDGET (I.E. 7 PERCENT) WERE NOT AGREED ON WHAT IT SHOULD BE. THERE WAS A TENDENCY TO ACCEPT THE VIEW THAT TO DERIVE A BASE IN 1978-79 TERMS FOR THE 1980-81 BUDGET BY ESTIMATING NON-RECURRING COSTS WAS RISKY BECAUSE OF THE INCOMPLETE DATA AVAILABLE TO THE GROUP. FURTHERMORE, ANY INDICATION TO THE DG THAT

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WE WERE USING ANY OTHER BASE THAN THE \$211,350,000 ON WHICH HIS REAL GROWTH SUGGESTIONS WERE BASED WOULD TEND TO DIVERT THE ARGUMENT AND BE UNCLEAR TO HIM. THUS, THOSE MEMBERS WHO FAVORED GIVING AN INDICATION OF THE GROUP'S THINKING IN REAL GROWTH TERMS, FAVORED CALCULATING IT FROM \$211,350,000.00.

5. THERE WAS ALSO A TENDENCY TO AGREE THAT SINCE THE DG WAS THINKING IN BIENNIAL REAL GROWTH TERMS, IT MIGHT BE UNDESIRABLE TO USE PER ANNUM REAL GROWTH PERCENTAGES. (WHO HAD, IN INTERPRETING THE "UP TO 2 PERCENT PER ANNUM" DECISION OF THE GOVERNING BODY, SIMPLY DOUBLED IT YIELDING A 4 PERCENT PER BIENNIAL GUIDELINE, A HIGHER BIENNIAL PERCENTAGE THAN WOULD RESULT FROM APPLYING 2 PERCENT 50 EACH ANNUAL LEVEL).

6. THERE WAS NO AGREEMENT, HOWEVER, EVEN AMONG THIS MAJORITY GROUP, AS TO WHAT LEVEL, IF ANY, SHOULD BE SUGGESTED TO THE DG AT AN INITIAL INFORMAL SESSION, THE RANGE SPREADING FROM ZERO NET REAL GROWTH TO 3 PERCENT FOR THE BIENNIAL. IN VIEW OF THIS, AND OF THE ABOVE-DESCRIBED FRENCH AND DUTCH POSITIONS, IT WAS AGREED TO INVITE THOSE INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE IN A DRAFTING SESSION SEPTEMBER 12 IN AN EFFORT TO FIND A FORMULA FOR THIS TILL UNRESOLVED ASPECT OF THE PRESENTATION AROUND WHICH THE GROUP COULD HOPE TO COALESCE AND TO EXAMINE THIS FORMULA AT A FULL GENVA GROUP MEETING ON SEPTEMBER 14. HOLMES

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